VIII. *Part of a Letter from* Mr. T. M. *in* Salop, *to Mr.* William Baxter, *concerning the ſtrange effects from the eating* Dog-mercury *with Remarks thereon by* Hans Sloan M. D. *and* S. R. S.

——W. *Matthews*, his Wife and Three Children, have been lately very ill, and like to dye; the occaſion and manner of their Sickneſs was very odd, and therefore I ſhall give you a particular account of both. About Three Weeks ago, the Woman went into the Fields and gathered ſome Herbs, and (having firſt Boyled them) Fryed them with Bacon for her own and her Families Supper: After they had been about Two Howrs in Bed, one of the Children (which is Dumb and about Seven Years Old) fell very Sick, and ſo did the other Two preſently after; which obliged the Man and his Wife to Riſe and take the Children to the Fire, where they Vomited and Purged, and within half an Hour fell faſt aſleep. They took the Children to bed as they were aſleep, and they themſelves went to bed too, and fell faſter aſleep too than ever they had done before. The Man waked the next Morning about Three Hours after his uſual Time, went to his Labour at Mr *Newports*, and ſo by the ſtrength of his conſtitution carried it off; but he ſays, he thought his Chin had bin all the Day in a Fire, and was forced to keep his Hat full of Water by him all the Day long, and frequently dipt his Chin in it as he was at his Work. The Woman wakened a while after her Husband, and being forced to get up to look after her little Family concerns; but ſhe was very Sick and has continued ſo till within theſe few Days, ſince which ſhe is very well recovered. One of their Children ſlept from that Night (which was Thurſday Three Weeks)

till Monday Evening following; and then (having juſt only opened her Eyes and made Two Sprunts, without ſpeaking one word) dyed imediately while ſhe was aſleep; endeavours were uſed to awaken her, but in vain. The other Two Children ſlept about Twenty Four Hours, and upon their wakening fell a Vomiting and Purging again, which I think ſaved their Lives. By Mr. *Newports* and my Direction, they ſent ſome of the ſame Herb to the Doctors and Apothecaries in *Salop*, who generally ſay 'tis *Dog-mercury*, but ſome ſay 'tis a ſort of Night ſhade: whatever it be, 'tis certainly Poiſonous, and 'tis obſerved that the Cattle never browſe it. *Matthews* told me he never eat ſo pleaſant an Herb in his Life; and his Wife ſays that her old Maſter, *viz.* Mr. *Moxon* did frequently eat of it; but I gueſs it to be a miſtake. I know your profound Judgment and Learning in theſe matters, and have therefore given you t his large Account. I am no herbariſt, but this I obſerved of the Herb; 'tis branched and ſeeded ſomething like *Spinage* or *Mercury*, but leaved rather like *Lakeweed*. The leaves are dented too.

Yours,

T. M.

SIR,

THE encloſed Letter was ſent laſt *April*, to Mr. *William Baxter*, who ſoon after did me the Favour to ſhe w it me; I found the operations of the Plant there in me ntioned to be extraordinary, and the Circumſtances r elated very particularly, and that the account was the

the more Surprizing if it ſhould be *Dog-mercury*; which by all Writers I have peruſed, is reckoned innocent and to have the ſame Vertue with the ordinary Mercury uſed every day by Phiſitians. On theſe Conſiderations I begg'd the Favour of Mr. *Baxter*, that he would pleaſe to write to the Gentleman who ſent the Account, for a Dried Sample or Specimen of the Herb; which he did, and it proves to be the ſame they thought it was, the Stalks, Leaves and Spikes agreeing exactly in every thing with thoſe of *Dog-Mercury*. It is deſcrib'd and figur'd in ſeveral Authors. Mr. *Ray* in his Hiſtory of Plants calls it *Mercurialis Perennis repens* Cynocrambe *dicta*, p.163. *Gerard* calls it *Cynocrambe*, p. 333. *Parkinſon*, *Mercurialis Sylveſtris Cynocrambe dicta vulgaris*, p. 295. *Theatr. Botan. Johan. Bauhine* in his Second Tome, *Lib.* 23. *Cynocrambe mas & fœmina ſive Mercurialis repens*, p.979. And *Caſpar Bauhine* in his *Pinax*, p.122. *Mercurialis Montana teſticulata & ſpicata*: In which Books the other Names given it by other *Herbaliſts* may be found, whither I refer you for a further Account of it. Whether the Quantity or Quality of this were the Cauſe of the Effects I know not, but think that every Body will do well to be cautious and wary in the uſe of it in ſuch Quantities, after ſuch a Warning.

Tours, &c.